

Disappointed by Defeat of Amendment to place 3,000 National Guard at Border

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell today voted for, and the House passed, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2011, H.R. 5136, to authorize critical defense programs to ensure that the military is fully prepared for global threats and challenges. H.R. 5136 passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 229-186.

"I believe that we have the best and bravest military in the world, and we need to ensure that we maintain that advantage," said Mitchell. "In order do this, we need to give our troops the right tools they need to protect us, as well the benefits they have earned not only while they are enlisted, but when they become veterans."

The legislation authorizes \$725.9 billion for defense programs, \$159.3 billion in specific funds for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and efforts to combat terrorism, \$10.3 billion for missile defense programs and authorizes a 1.9 percent pay raise for military personnel.

Mitchell also voted in favor of an amendment offered by Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-PA) to H.R. 5136, to authorize the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," provided that the Department of Defense completes its current review of the impact such repeal would have, and determines that implementation would not adversely impact military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion and recruiting.

"We have the strongest, smartest and bravest troops in the world. I believe it is wrong to discriminate against them on the basis of race. I believe it is wrong to discriminate against them on the basis of religion. I believe it is wrong to discriminate against them on the basis of sexual orientation," said Mitchell. "I look forward to the results of the Defense Department's review."

Mitchell said he was disappointed by the defeat of the bipartisan amendment he offered with Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Cal.) to the Defense Authorization legislation to deploy a minimum of 3,000 additional National Guard troops to the border. The amendment mirrored legislation that Mitchell and Rohrabacher introduced last week, H.R. 5357 - the Deploy National Guard Troops to the Border Act. Mitchell's amendment was blocked from consideration by the full

House.

"The federal government has failed to secure the border and fix our broken immigration system. And Arizona continues to pay a heavy price for it. If we're serious about stopping the smuggling, we need at least 3,000 additional National Guard troops at the border. And that's just for starters."

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